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For Immediate Release:

UNEMPLOYMENT RATE DOWN TO 5.2%

(HELENA) --- Montana's unemployment rate dropped down to 5.2% in October after holding at 5.3% since July. The national unemployment rate was 7.3% in October. The federal government shutdown prevented the release of labor market information last month. Data from both September and October months are highlighted in this release.

"The federal government shutdown depressed employment growth in October, leaving Montana with lower job counts than in September" said Labor Commissioner Pam Bucy. "However, Montana added about 750 jobs in September, suggesting that the economy is continuing its upswing despite the rancor in Washington."

Payroll employment estimates suggest small job losses in both September and October of 800 jobs and 400 jobs, respectively. Job losses for October occurred fully within government employment, likely a result of the federal government shutdown. September job losses occurred in the Professional and Business Services Industry, which has generally posted rapid job growth throughout the last year. Employment in Professional and Business Services remains roughly 2,000 jobs higher than last year with a rapid growth rate of 4.4% over the year.

Total employment, which includes payroll employment plus agricultural and self-employed workers, added 767 jobs in September, but posted a 57 job loss in October. Over-the-year total employment gains remain positive, with Montana adding 1,722 jobs since October of 2012, for a growth rate of 0.4%. Although employment continues to expand in Montana during 2013, the job growth rate this year is slower than the above-average job growth of 2.2% during 2012.

Prices fell by 0.1% in October due to a 2.9% decline in gasoline prices. Last month, energy prices drove up consumer prices by 0.2%, so prices have been fairly flat over the two month period. Core inflation, measured by the all items less food and energy index, rose by 0.1% in both September and October.

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*** Unemployment figures are seasonally-adjusted. Seasonally-adjusted numbers remove the effects of events that follow a more or less regular month-to-month pattern each year. These adjustments make nonseasonal patterns easier to identify. The margin of error*

for the unemployment rate is plus or minus 0.8 percentage points at the 90 percent confidence level. All questions relating to the calculation of unemployment rates should be directed to the Montana Department of Labor and Industry's Research and Analysis Bureau at 1-800-541-3904.

The next Labor Situation Report will be released on Friday, December 20, 2013.

******* INFORMATION AVAILABLE ON THE INTERNET *******



Visit our website at www.lmi.mt.gov for additional information and analysis, including industry employment levels, background on the unemployment rate, and annual employment data for Montana's Indian Reservations. **The decline in the labor force participation rate is explained in this month's Economy at a Glance article.** County unemployment rates and employment levels are not seasonally adjusted and should be compared to the unadjusted statewide unemployment rate of **4.8%**. County labor force information can be found by

using this link: <http://www.ourfactsyourfuture.org/cgi/databrowsing/?PAGEID=4&SUBID=205>.